

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AMBASSADOR AT LARGE
WASHINGTON

March 19, 1964

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MEMORANDUM FOR

THE HONORABLE McGEORGE BUNDY
The White House

Alexis Johnson has discussed with me your views on notification to the Soviets of our attitude toward a possible Cuban shoot-down of a U-2 after the Cubans assume control of the SAM sites.

I feel sure that even an informal approach will prompt a reply from the Soviets and that they would be bound to state that the Cubans have every right to defend their sovereignty over their air space. The important thing, in my view, is that if the Cubans do shoot down a U-2; we will want to treat our retaliatory action as a purely United States/Cuban affair. This would be much harder to do if we were on prior notice from the Soviets that they would support the Cubans in their defense of their sovereignty, which is a quite possible Soviet response to any direct approach on our part. I feel confident that before turning over the SAMs to the Cubans, the Soviets will have had some understanding with them about their use. If the Cubans should shoot down a plane without prior agreement with the Soviets, I think it quite possible that the Soviets, while making fierce noises, would not, in fact, give the Cubans real support and would use the violation of their understanding as an excuse for not doing so.

Llewellyn E. Thompson

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By AMG NARS, Date 7/15/97

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